

MINUTES
BROWN COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
Monday, August 17, 2009
City Hall
100 N. Jefferson Street, Room 604
Green Bay, WI 54301
3:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Darlene Hallet- Chair, Michael Welch-Vice Chair, Paul Kendle, Tom Diedrick.

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Rich Aicher.

OTHERS PRESENT: Robyn Hallet, Jake Lopez, Anne May Steffel, Rob Strong, DonElls Payne, Matt Roberts, Chip Law, D. Swanson, M. Mason.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Approval of the minutes from the July 20, 2009, meeting of the Brown County Housing Authority.

A motion was made by T. Diedrick and seconded by M. Welch to approve the minutes from the July 20, 2009, meeting of the Brown County Housing Authority. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

REPORTS:

2. Report on Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance Program, with possible action on the Monthly Tracking of the Preliminary Applications.

A. Preliminary Applications

D. Payne stated that there were 159 preliminary applications received by ICS for the month of July.

B. Housing Assistance Payments

D. Payne stated that for HAP there were \$1,045,430 dollars.

C. Housing Assistance Unit Count

D. Payne stated that the unit count did drop due to moves. The unit count is at 2,756. There are 833 people on the waiting list.

D. Housing Quality Standard Inspection Compliance

M. Roberts stated that he hopes that this is turning back in the right direction. For the month of July there were 419 inspections. The fails have decreased down to 32.22%, which puts the total pass percentages at just under 70%, which is where they have consistently been. Initial inspections are still down a

bit and he would like to see that number come up. The re-evaluations are passing at a higher rate.

E. Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Costs and HUD 52681B

C. Law stated that for July the administrative fees are a little over \$18,000 dollars under budget.

F. SEMAP Monitoring Report

D. Payne stated that they are running at 100% and are still a high performer.

G. Report of the Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency Program.

D. Payne stated for the month of July there are 103 clients, of which, 41 have escrow accounts, 2 graduated, and there are 4 new contracts.

H. Report on the Housing Choice Voucher Home Ownership Option.

D. Payne stated that the client count is at 94.

3. Report on Langan Investigations Criminal Background Screening and Fraud Investigations.

D. Payne stated that there were 32 investigations for July. 15 of the investigations were substantiated, 4 were closed because they could not be substantiated, and 13 are still open. She distributed a spreadsheet that Langan Investigations provided.

M. Mason addressed the spreadsheet and explained what the data tells the Authority. He stated that he did not realize that the Authority was not getting these spreadsheets. The purpose of the spreadsheet is for the Authority to understand where they are working, what they are closing cases for, what they are denying applications for, what resources are utilized to solve a case, date case received, date case resolved, etc.

R. Strong stated that there is a concern with even though names are left off of the spreadsheet, the street address is still listed and we don't want people to be able to target properties in their neighborhood. He requested that the address number be listed in a separate field so that only the street name is listed, or maybe just list the community the property is in rather than the address.

M. Mason stated that he would come up with something to address that concern.

OLD BUSINESS:

D. Hallet stated that item 4 belongs under old business, not new business.

4. Discussion and action on a recommendation from the Brown County Administration Committee "to require that people on the waiting list contact the Housing Authority office each month in order to keep their application active."

R. Strong stated that he and Greg Geiser had attended the Brown County Administration Committee approximately two months ago and at that time the item

on the agenda was to recommend to the Authority to reduce the scale of the program by returning vouchers to HUD. After doing some research, HUD does not take vouchers back unless they come back with the money. The money the Authority has is being used to support the vouchers that are out there so there could not be vouchers turned back in. The Administration Committee felt there were other things that the Authority could do and one of the suggestions was to reduce the amount of payment that is made on the average and that way everyone on the list could be funded. It was suggested that the average amount of payment be reduced by about \$50. It was explained to the Administration Committee that we can't just cut the payments because people are relying on these payments. However, every year when the Authority does come to the Committee to ask for adjustments, the payments could be frozen or maybe bring the payments down on the utility side. This was approved at the last meeting.

R. Strong stated that another suggestion made by the Committee is this one listed on the agenda. This is an effort to try and make sure that the Brown County residents that need help are going to be helped first. By requiring people to keep in touch while they are on the waiting list it would stop them from coming in to Green Bay, establishing residency for a day, a week, or whatever is required, put in their application and then head back to their home wherever that may be and wait. The Administrative Committee's suggestion would require applicants to come in and register on a monthly basis and state they are still active and interested in the program and that they are still a resident of Brown County. This item was held up from the last meeting in order to give ICS a chance to look into it.

Also at that meeting there was a motion to have the Authority close the waiting list and not take any more applications until the list was significantly reduced. That motion was voted down at the Committee level but when it went to the County Board, the County Board did approve it 15-8. When the waiting list does get down to a certain number, it would be reopened. Anyone could still apply, but the local residents would be made aware of the fact that applications are being accepted again and they should then be able to get their application in quickly and we would be able to serve Brown County first. To date he has not received formal notice of this request so that is why it is not on the agenda.

D. Payne stated that she has started to do research on having people check in monthly. She has looked at the regulations and spoken with HUD. She stated that Rich Aicher had suggested that for the non-preference, the people that don't live here, we could require them to check in monthly. That goes completely against HUD regulations, which forbids basing admission on where someone lives. If we did establish a procedure where the non-preference people had to come in and check in monthly, we are basically telling them they are not eligible for the program. This would also impact Fair Housing because people in Chicago and Milwaukee have high minority populations and the regulations would prohibit this if there is an impact on protected classes, which there would be if we followed that recommendation. A time study was done, and if we did have people who are on the preference list checking in monthly with us to stay on the list, that would create a half FTE position. Currently ICS has a process where once a year something is sent out to the people on the list to see if they still want to be on the list, if their

address is still current, etc. Her concern is the impact it would have with staff to try and do this every month. She is not sure what the benefit is and what is trying to be gained by doing this.

R. Strong stated that at the Committee level, the hope was to ensure that the people in Brown County who have needs are being met first. The idea was to have these individuals contact us and check in every month to make sure they are still interested in the program and are living in Brown County.

M. Welch stated that we do not want to create any additional hardship for clients that are elderly or disabled and asked if it were known what number of participants would fall into those classes.

D. Payne stated that with the waiting list breakdown, the first preferences are elderly, disabled, and veterans. There are currently 69 on that list. If the list were closed, those would be pulled off of the list next month. There are 258 households with minors on the list within Brown County. If the waiting list were closed then we would have exhausted that preference by the end of this year. The third preference is all others residing in Brown County. The last time anyone was pulled from this list was March of 2008. There are 278 individuals on this list. This will be exhausted in February if the waiting list is closed down. The last time anyone was pulled from the non-preference list outside of Brown County was back in 2001. There are 239 people on that list.

R. Strong stated that if we closed the program, everything would be used up within six months.

C. Law stated that part of the problem at the county level is the lack of understanding of the program. There seems to be the idea that there are simple fixes that could be implemented and that is not the case. Between the HUD regulations and Fair Housing there are a lot of things that need to be taken into consideration. At the end of the day he does not see anything gained from making this change.

R. Hallet stated that applicants are required to update ICS with their new address when they move. If someone is living here for a day and they apply and are approved and given the preference, if they move to another area, they have to notify ICS of that and they are then put on the non-preference waiting list. If they do not notify ICS that they have moved and a letter is sent out letting them know that their name has come up, the mail is returned to ICS because it is marked with return service requested. The ICS mail is not forwarded even if the applicant has put in a forwarding request with the post office. ICS then knows immediately that they have moved outside of Brown County.

P. Kendle stated that it seems like the issue is that there is a perception out there that the people who are applying for the program are transient from somewhere else and are coming to this community because they can receive housing assistance or housing vouchers. Is there any data to contradict that perception?

C. Law stated that by HUD's definition of resident, a person only has to live here for a day. The Authority has requirements put into place for someone to have a complete preliminary application that are more than just being here for one day. The individual needs to have an address, a driver's license with that address, etc. He does not believe it is the norm that people are coming here just for the assistance.

R. Hallet stated that while availability of vouchers may be a factor that influences someone's decision to move here, there are so many other factors that come into that decision like the good schools, the ability to get a good job, and the fact that this is a good community to live in.

R. Strong stated that he agreed with P. Kendle and we need to have statistics that show very clearly how many people had been living in Brown County for more than a year when they got into the program vs. those who have not.

C. Law stated that they would pull together some stats and include it in the workshop if that is approved. The workshop is going to be addressed under item 8 on this agenda.

M. Welch questioned why minors are given a preference over Brown County residents.

D. Payne stated that the first preference is elderly, disabled, or a vet that lives in Brown County. The second preference is families with minor children that live in Brown County. Anything else as far as residence in Brown County falls into the third preference.

R. Hallet questioned if stats were available to show how many applications have been denied because of the lack of proof of an address. This would help the Administrative Committee see that not everyone who applies gets on the waiting list.

P. Kendle stated that his recommendation would be to prepare a response to the Administrative Committee in regards to the waiting list that states that the Authority feels that the system currently in place where we communicate only by mail and the people on the list can only be notified if they are receiving their mail at that address, accomplishes what the Committee is looking for. We are only helping people who are in need in Brown County and not people who are saying they are in Brown County but actually live somewhere else.

A motion was made by P. Kendle and seconded by T. Diedrick to prepare a response to the Administrative Committee regarding the system currently in place and utilized by ICS. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

5. Discussion and action on a proposal to amend Chapter 8 of the Administrative Plan.

M. Roberts stated that Chapter 8 is the Housing Quality Standards for inspection. There are 24 proposed changes, which are listed in red. He went through each change and briefly explained what the intention of the change is.

Regarding the proposed change for railings, R. Strong stated that the City of Green Bay had recently made a change to its requirements for hand rails and tied that into the age of the home.

M. Roberts stated he would check on this but felt HUD regulations may be what ICSS would need to follow.

Regarding the proposed change for smoke detectors, R. Hallet questioned the change that says, "whereas a smoke detector is not functioning and it is the ONLY smoke detector on that floor of the unit, the situation may then be considered a life threatening situation, and the tenant or landlord is required to resolve the inoperable smoke detector within 5 day of the date of the inspection notice." She questioned if that should be changed to be resolved within 24 hours.

M. Roberts stated the wording would need to be reworked. If it is the only smoke detector on the floor and is not working, it would be considered life threatening and need to be fixed within 24 hours. If it is not the only smoke detector on the floor and the other(s) do work, it would not be considered life threatening and they would then have 5 days to make the necessary repairs.

M. Roberts referenced the last sentence in the last paragraph on page 8-25. The word "business" would need to be removed. He forgot to take that word out.

A motion was made by P. Kendle and seconded by M. Welch to approve the amendments to Chapter 8 of the Administrative Plan, with changes discussed at tonight's meeting. Motion carried.

6. Discussion and action on a proposal to amend Chapter 9 of the Administrative Plan.

D. Payne stated that there is only the one change, which is highlighted in yellow. The change states: "The initial lease and HAP contract term in a new unit will be for one year beginning the first of the next month after both of the following have occurred: the unit has passed inspection AND the family began tenancy. (Eff:8/1/2009)"

There being no questions D. Hallet called for a motion.

A motion was made by M. Welch and seconded by P. Kendle to approve the amendment to Chapter 9 of the Administrative Plan. Motion carried.

7. Discussion and possible action on the Self Sufficiency Annual Fundraiser.

D. Payne stated that the annual fundraiser would be held on September 15th. She distributed invitations to the Authority. Last year the Authority donated \$250

towards the fundraiser. The funding that is raised through the fundraiser is used to help with the workshops and training that they do, supplies for the workshops, and all of the extra services that are really needed for the Self Sufficiency programs to be successful. HUD provides salaries only, so they rely on this fundraiser.

A motion was made by M. Welch and seconded by T. Diedrick to donate \$250 to the Self Sufficiency Annual Fundraiser. Motion carried.

8. Discussion and action on the proposal to conduct HCV Process Workshop for BC:HA members and Brown County Board.

D. Payne stated that she believes there is a lot of misunderstanding and misconceptions so there are two different dates being considered to hold this workshop. The dates are Tuesday, October 6th from 10:00 a.m. to noon, and Thursday, October 8th from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. They would like to have everyone from the Authority attend but are looking to also send an invitation out to the Brown County Board, and any other elected officials. It is a very basic workshop and they would be using the stats that were discussed earlier and explain the process and steps involved when someone asks for an application for assistance. It would be giving people an overview of what is involved.

R. Strong stated that holding the workshop during the day would not be the way to go: officials here. They are not going to take off of work to go to a workshop. He suggested that for the City Council or County Board, to hold the workshop about an hour before their actual meeting since they have to come in for that anyway.

M. Welch suggested that instead of going after the whole Board, maybe to do this by committee. Maybe approach the Brown County Administrative Committee to attend.

R. Strong stated that he felt this should be the BCHA making the presentation stating this is what we do and this is the program that we manage and then bring up whoever they would like to speak on various issues. R. Hallet may speak about the structure of the Authority and how it was created and what this entity is and the responsibilities.

R. Strong stated that at the September BCHA meeting, we would go over what has been put together and then present it to the Administrative Committee in October.

The Authority has directed that a presentation should be put together for the Administrative Committee and that it would be previewed at the next meeting of the Brown County Housing Authority.

9. Notice to Public regarding the Brown County Housing Authority 2010-2014 Five-Year and 2010 Annual Agency Plan.

R. Hallet stated on July 21, 2009, the Notice to Public was published to notify the public of the two public hearings on September 8th and September 21st. The public will be allowed to give any input they want on the annual and five-year plan.

R. Strong stated that no action is required on this item.

BILLS:

A motion was made by T. Diedrick and seconded by P. Kendle to approve payment of the bills. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

The financial report was received and placed on file.

STAFF REPORT:

Robyn Hallet, Housing Administrator, and Jacob Lopez, Housing Intern, were introduced to the Authority.

R. Strong thanked Anne May Steffel for stepping up over the last eight months and helping out while the Housing Administrator position was vacant.

A motion was made by P. Kendle and seconded by M. Welch to adjourn the meeting at 4:41 p.m. Motion carried.

:dmr